

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB CI
SUBJECT: CHUQUICAMATA: GOC AGREES TO REINSTATE SIX MINERS IF
WORKERS END PROTEST ACTION

REF: SANTIAGO 6277

1. AN AGREEMENT WAS ANNOUNCED AUGUST 29 WHICH WILL END
THE THIRTY DAY NO LUNCH PROTEST CONDUCTED BY COPPER MINERS
AND BLUE COLLAR WORKERS AT THE CHUQUICAMATA MINE COMPLEX.
THE AGREEMENT WAS WORKED OUT AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF CON-
FUSION. LAST WEEK AFTER THE INITIAL DETAILS OF THE AGREE-
MENT HAD BEEN LAID OUT BY THE MINISTER OF LABOR, VASCO
COSTA, OFFICIALS OF CODELCO (THE STATE COPPER COMPANY)
APPARENTLY BALKED AND HAD A SCHEDULED ASSEMBLY CANCELED.
AFTER URGENT TELEPHONE CALLS, THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR
AGAIN AUTHORIZED THE ASSEMBLY, BUT THE COPPER LEADERS
DECIDED NOT TO HOLD THE MEETING AS THEY WERE NOT SURE OF
WHAT THEY SHOULD TELL THE WORKERS. IN ADDITION, THE LABOR
COURT HAD POSTPONED HEARINGS ON THE FIRING OF SIX WORKERS
UNTIL THE COMPANY COULD PRESENT ITS CASE. THE COURT HAS
AGREED TO HEAR THE CASE NOW ON AUGUST 31.

2. THE AGREEMENT WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE COMPANY AND
THE COPPER LEADERS CALLS FOR THE COMPANY TO REINSTATE THE
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SIX WORKERS FIRED EARLIER THIS MONTH WITHIN FORTY EIGHT
HOURS. THE UNION, IN ITS TURN, PROMISES TO CALL FOR THE
END OF THE "NO LUNCH" PROTEST WITHIN THE SAME TIME
PERIOD. AN ASSEMBLY OF WORKERS IS SCHEDULED FOR THIS
EVENING, AUGUST 30. IF THE WORKERS ACCEPT, THE WAY WILL
BE CLEARED FOR NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE COMPANY AND THE
UNION ON THE ECONOMIC ISSUES THAT PROMPTED THE PROTEST

MOVEMENT.

3. COMMENT: THE CHILEAN WORKERS AT CHUQUICAMATA HAD MADE REINSTATEMENT OF THE SIX THEIR PRIOR DEMAND IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH CODELCO AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. SOME BELIEVE THAT CODELCO KNEW THIS WOULD BE THE CASE WHEN IT FIRED THEM AND HOPED THEREBY TO DEFLECT DISCUSSIONS FROM THE UNDERLYING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THE WORKERS APPEAR TO HAVE GAINED THE OBJECTIVE OF REINSTATEMENT (ASSUMING FAVORABLE ACTION AT TONIGHT'S ASSEMBLY) BUT AT THE PRICE OF ENDING THE PROTEST ACTION. THERE IS THUS SOMEWHAT LESS PRESSURE ON CODELCO AND THE GOC TO MOVE PROMPTLY AND RESPONSIVELY ON THE NEXT STAGE OF THE TALKS.

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